

Citizen Advertising

Consumer-Told Brand Folklore

Media democracy is the underlying philosophy driving the participatory Web. It has driven the development of participatory, conversational, and fluid social communities, which encourage and enable members to produce, publish, control, critique, rank, and interact with online content. The lessons provided in *The Tipping Point*, which are applicable to understanding the influential network effects possible with social network advertising, are again applicable here.¹ Gladwell advocates that viral spread is partially a function of the concept's stickiness and the application of the law of context. Stickiness is the degree to which the message inspires action. Context is whether the message has sufficient "legs" to inspire others to develop a community around it. Can brands inspire a community? If so, will community members, brand enthusiasts, be inspired to produce and cocreate brand content, which can then be published and shared with others? The development of CGM, especially consumer-generated advertising, suggests the answer to these questions is a resounding yes. Brands can leverage media democracy for their own marketing objectives when engaged consumers are motivated to create and cocreate branded messages for a public audience. The result is consumer-generated advertising, a brand-centric type of user-generated content.

User-generated content, also known as CGM, user-created content, and conversational media, encompasses any content produced by end users and made public (typically online). The report “Participative Web: User-Created Content,” prepared by the OECD, defines user-generated content as content that (1) is made publicly available online, (2) reflects some creative effort on the part of the user, and (3) is created outside professional practice.² Thus, it is a broad range of content which can be classified as user generated, including videos, photos, blogs and vlogs, comments and responses to other content, podcasts, forum discussions, online product reviews, wiki contributions, and consumer-generated advertising. Content creation is not uncommon. According to Deloitte & Touche’s “The State of the Media Democracy” report, 40% of Internet users create some form of content, whether it is editing videos, posting photos, or writing blogs, and 51% acknowledge reading and watching the content of other users online.³ With younger consumers, the consumption of user-generated content is even higher with 71% reporting watching and/or reading user-generated content online.

The lexicon of online marketers includes many commonly used phrases and accompanying acronyms related to CGM.⁴ *Consumer-generated media* is the catchall phrase for user content, but primarily is meant to reflect first-person commentary about brand experiences that consumers may produce and publish online in a variety of venues, including blogs, message boards and forums, online product review sites, product rating areas, social-networking sites, and photo- and video-sharing sites. CGM functions like publicity, intercepting consumers during product information search activities, whether through search queries or serendipitous discovery. The following terms identify specific types of CGM.

Consumer-generated multimedia (CGM2), a type of CGM, refers to content that includes audio, video, and perhaps animation. It is better able to capture an attentive audience due to its enhanced entertainment value, and enables visual demonstrations. YouTube’s success is tied directly to the prevalence and popularity of CGM2. CGM2 is thought to reflect primarily organic content. It may or may not be citizen advertising. Citizen advertising is content created by consumers using verbal and/or visual imagery to inform, persuade, or remind other consumers about a brand, resulting in an ad unit, which can be disseminated electronically or otherwise. Such ads are sometimes called V-CAMs, viewer created ad messages. CGM2 can refer to user videos that do not advocate for or against a brand, as well as citizen advertising. Perhaps the most famous example of citizen advertising is the “I Love My iPod” YouTube post from an Apple brand enthusiast. His YouTube video generated thousands of

ad impressions and Apple applauded it, acknowledging that the creativity and strategic positioning outpaced much of that in its own official campaign. The video promoted a brand but was totally organic. User content is organic when its creation was motivated by an intrinsic intent on the part of its creator rather than incentivized or guided by the brand itself. Organic, citizen advertising, at least when promoting the brand in a favorable light, is valuable and suggests highly engaged customers.

Consumer-solicited media (CSM) captures invited but non-incented citizen advertising. Sometimes called participatory advertising, brands invite content, setting mandatory guidelines and specifications and possibly also providing participants with selected brand assets. The most frequently used manifestation of CSM is the “create your own ad” contest, which has been used by numerous brands, including Frito-Lay, Dove, and Chevy. This form of citizen advertising has some degree of authenticity, although less than that of purely organic forms of consumer-generated advertising.

Incentivized consumer-generated media (iCGM) is CSM that is also incentivized by the sponsoring brand. It functions just as non-incentivized citizen-advertising campaigns except that the sponsor encourages submissions with incentives such as prize money, the chance for the winning entry to be broadcast on television (possibly during high-exposure events like the Super Bowl and the Oscars). Doritos used this approach with its Crash the Super Bowl campaign.

Consumer-fortified media (CFM) captures the phenomenon of consumer content that is created around the existence of some other content. The Dove Evolution commercial is a prime example. The spot was created professionally for the Unilever Dove brand, but much of the media value generated came from consumer conversation about the spot. Thousands discussed the ad in online forums and posted commentary and embedded links to the ad in blogs. Again, the result is like a credible, trustworthy form of publicity generated through consumer-controlled media.

Compensated consumer-generated media (cCGM) refers to paid consumer content. Consumers are paid for their content creations, and brands may actively seek out certain people like bloggers, videographers, and artists to participate in the campaign. For example, the company Pay-PerPost pays bloggers to endorse products. The Lonelygirl15 YouTube phenomenon was a planned, strategic marketing ploy to promote the capabilities of its producers. There are less malicious variations to this CGM model in that some content-publishing sites, primarily Revver, but also YouTube, offer to share revenues with authentic consumer content producers. Essentially, this form of CGM is counterfeit content—

nothing more than paid rich media advertising posing as authentic consumer expressions of their brand perceptions and posted on social-media community sites.

■ Citizen Advertising

Citizen advertising encompasses three of the categories of CGM reviewed above: (1) CGM2, (2) CSM, and (3) iCGM. All three forms capture the phenomena of consumer content creation and brand enthusiasm. When solicited (whether incentivized or not), the concept relies upon a process by which a company invites consumers to submit ads to a Web site. Engaged consumers, the brand enthusiasts and/or those with creative skill who dream of fame and fortune spend time with the product, thinking about the brand, developing the ad submission, and hyping the contest to their friends and family. The ads are shown online to encourage brand chatter to develop and spread. They also go through a review process, often involving a vote by other engaged consumers, whereupon the winners are awarded prize money and widespread distribution of their winning ad. Assuming there are quality entries, the brand then broadcasts the winning entries using a mass medium.

The CSM process embraces many of the characteristics of successful social-media marketing. The brand issues an invitation to consumers (and sometimes personal invitations to particularly talented brand fans) to engage with the brand by creating branded content. The act of inviting participation and dialogue serves to trigger the brand *democratization* process. Turning to the public for professional services is the essence of *crowdsourcing*, one of the outcomes of media democracy. Recall that *engagement* occurs as a “subtle, subconscious process in which consumers begin to combine the ad’s messages with their own associations, symbols, and metaphors to make the brand more personally relevant.”⁵ Brand democratization occurs when the brand acknowledges the value of consumer cocreation. The invitation is the source of *stickiness* Gladwell advocates is necessary to spark the spread of an idea. Engagement is the outcome of that democratization and the foundation for brand communities, another critical component of viral marketing. The content produced is from the consumer perspective, based on their values, wants, needs, and brand experiences. Thus, it should resonate with the target audience and benefit from their perception that the message is authentic. All the while, the campaign builds buzz on- and off-line, including word-of-mouth communication and publicity from stories published about the contest. Sarah Fay of Isobar reveals what could be thought of as the

mantra of effective citizen advertising: “Brands whose consumers tell the best stories to each other win—not those whose brands tell the best stories to consumers.”⁶

In the short period of time that citizen advertising has been utilized as a campaign strategy, it has generated enormous value. Listed below are several possible benefits that can accrue to brands that successfully incorporate citizen advertising into their integrated marketing campaigns.

- Increased customer engagement
- Enhanced interactivity for campaign
- Improved brand image
- Increased brand loyalty
- Access to new ideas from users
- Buzz generation and publicity
- Increased site traffic (on microsites and primary brand Web sites)
- Increased insight into target markets (including how consumers perceive the brand and its positioning)
- Lower production costs for creative content

Brands like Doritos, Dove Cream Oil Body Wash, Pontiac, and Oreos have successfully driven traffic to their Web sites, spawned buzz and word-of-mouth communication on- and off-line, and benefited from a new source of creative talent, all for an efficient cost. Consumer-generated advertising is thought to cost 25%–30% of the amount required for agency work. Big brands recognize the potential of citizen advertising, but the costs of execution make it a natural alternative for small- to medium-sized businesses.

■ Creative Control and Distribution Approaches

As noted, citizen advertising exists along a continuum, progressing from totally organic contributions (pure citizen advertising) to mechanistic contributions (solicited and incentivized campaigns). The notion of a continuum helps to reflect the relative degree of control over the resulting ad and source of motivation for creating content. At one extreme, totally organic media tantalizes content producers with complete control over the message strategy, creative execution, and distribution of content. These ads can appear on video-sharing sites like YouTube, and links to them may be embedded in blogs and on social-networking sites. Their distribution grows virally, determining their success or failure in terms

of viewer impressions. Consumers of organic citizen ads are influenced by the credibility and authenticity that accompanies communication that is not sponsored by a commercial entity but offered for consideration from one consumer to another. Chances are that brands that become the subject of organic citizen ads are either “lovemarks,” a phrase coined by Kevin Roberts to capture those brands that inspire emotional attachment with their customers, or hated by customers, who use citizen advertising to terrorize the brand. These citizen ad producers are known as brand terrorists because they create content as an attempt to harm a brand’s equity and position in the marketplace. Search “iPod” on YouTube, and many examples of organic citizen advertising created to educate consumers about iPod’s battery life and disappointing customer service will appear. The now infamous video of a person using a Bic pen to open a Kryptonite brand bicycle lock is another example of organic CGA used to harm a brand’s position, or at least warn fellow consumers of a brand’s limitations. Organic ads reflect media democracy, but (even for the positive, brand advocacy ads) they are not being actively leveraged by a brand to accomplish marketing objectives, including the almighty goal of brand engagement.

Solicited and incentivized citizen-advertising campaigns are more mechanistic because they typically restrain the participating consumers by requiring that certain mandatory elements be included (for instance, the brand’s tagline might be a required element of the ad), specifications be met (such as a set length of exposure time), and brand assets (such as the brand’s logo and even specific imagery and music) be utilized. The degree of control varies from campaign to campaign, however, with some encouraging extensive creative freedom (as was the case with the Converse Brand Democracy campaign) and others soliciting very narrow creative components (as with Mastercard’s Priceless execution). The Dove Cream Oil Body Wash promotion spawned ads more closely approximating organic ads in that the contest guidelines did not limit participants to brand-approved assets like specific slogans, copy, images, or music.

Brands that seek greater control over messaging can limit contributors to packages of brand-endorsed assets, including audio, video, copy, and imagery. Called “mash-ups,” users build their advertising messages from “ingredients” or “kits” provided on the brand’s Web site. A key benefit of limiting participants to marketer-provided ingredients is the ability to increase the likelihood that the resulting ads will be consistent with the brand’s positioning strategy. Consistency with brand positioning strategy is a frequently cited concern for brands considering citizen advertising. Heavily restricted creative specifications help to minimize this concern.

Mastercard's citizen component to its Priceless campaign illustrates the control brands can maintain while inviting consumer participation. It requested only copy lines from consumers. However, using this limited form does not preclude consumers from creating organic ads. There are numerous spoofs of the Priceless campaign on YouTube and Google Video.

Chevy Tahoe's Apprentice contest used the packaged approach. Participants could select from several scenes, mix the order and number of scene shots, and add music. In terms of imagery, every consumer-generated ad created showed gorgeous shots of the Tahoe driving in rural landscapes. If one were to look only at the scenery, the implication is clear—the Tahoe is a desirable, sleek SUV with the ability to take its driver wherever he wishes to go. However, even with a packaged approach complete with brand assets, Tahoe did not eliminate the risks associated with citizen advertising. Contributors wrote their own copy for their ads, and it was with the copy that contributors shared their criticisms of Tahoe, and SUVs in general. Should Chevy have limited contributors with copy choices, too? Doing so would have minimized some of the parodies created during the contest. But it would also have limited the overall impact of the campaign. Because Chevy provided some freedom of expression for participants, its campaign promotion became viral with users posting their ads on YouTube and bloggers providing links to the Chevy Web site and to videos posted elsewhere. The sheer controversy over whether it was a smart marketing move or not resulted in valuable publicity for the Tahoe brand.

The degree of citizen control on the continuum of organic to mechanistic is one factor that must be considered by brands, but an equally important aspect is the distribution method. Consumer-generated ads may be shared with others via online space that is primarily user controlled (like YouTube and other file-sharing sites) and/or through brand-controlled outlets.

Pontiac has created just such a site and named it Pontiac Underground (visit <http://pontiacunderground.autos.yahoo.com/>). The site is provided through a partnership between Pontiac and Yahoo! but allows users to post photographs, share videos, and discuss opinions and information through forums and opinion polls. It is a brand-controlled space that still allows users a great deal of freedom. Even the slogan encourages Pontiac enthusiasts to contribute material, "Where Passion for Pontiac is Driven by You." As such, it successfully leverages CGA as a builder of brand equity.

The Converse Brand Democracy campaign invited films inspired by Converse for posting on its Converse Gallery microsite. The Converse

submissions allowed a high degree of creative freedom with the only limitation being a requirement that submissions be twenty-three seconds in length (to easily enable Converse to use submissions for television commercials). Nikon sent one of its new digital camera models to several users of Flickr, the photo-sharing social network, and invited them to use the camera and submit their pictures. The best photos were then used to create a three-page insert in *BusinessWeek*. Southwest Airlines used a different tactic by distributing ad submissions to its Wanna Get Away campaign extension contest, posting them on YouTube instead of on a Southwest microsite, but it screened all submissions first, allowing only those deemed consistent with the brand's strategy online.

In solicited and incentivized campaigns, the shared distribution system must recognize that while video files will be posted on the sponsoring site they will also likely spread as a result of the use of video-sharing networks by the citizens themselves. When brands systematically expose an audience to citizen advertising through traditional media channels, like television and online vehicles, in branded spaces (e.g., www.jinglesforpringles.com), they are maximizing the reach and enhancing the opportunity for the campaign to engage others. Brands may attempt to restrict distribution of submissions in the contest rules, an important choice given the potential for poorly executed concepts and damaging content, but even then it would be short-sighted for brands to fail to recognize that there is an "underground" where such content, whether organic or packaged, can thrive.

■ Heed the Warnings

Of course, as with any developing tool, there are risks to brands that invite their customers to contribute CGA. Perhaps the most salient risk to brands is the potential for contributors to highlight negative attributes of the brand. Chevy Tahoe experienced just this when it invited consumers to create their own Tahoe ads using a mix of images and music provided on its Web site. Tahoe, like many other brands, limited contributors to "mash-ups," meaning that contributors could select only images and music provided on the site. Tahoe's risk arose from allowing contributors to write their own copy for their ads, and it was the copy that revealed the views of consumers. The Web site used for the CGA promotion, www.chevyapprentice.com, is no longer active, but some of the ads created are still available on YouTube.

A more recent promotion from Dove Cream Oil Body Wash did not inspire parodists to the same degree, but consumers who wish to parody brands do not miss out on such opportunities. The "winning"

consumer-generated ad is available for viewing on the Dove Cream Oil Web site, www.dovecreamoil.com. But spoofs also appeared in response to the citizen solicitation on YouTube.

Another potential hazard exists in how consumers view the brand's use of the tactic itself. A survey conducted by the American Marketing Association found that while consumers over the age of 25 felt that companies using consumer-generated advertising were "more creative, customer-friendly, and innovative than companies using only professionally creative advertising," those under the age of 25 felt just the opposite.⁷ Why might perceptions of brands using citizen advertising vary so extensively? Execution is the key. Younger consumers are more literate than older consumers when it comes to engagement tactics. CGA promotions that fail to be executed in a manner consistent with the target market and the brand's image or those with questionable authenticity will not resonate with consumers high in social commerce literacy. Take, for instance, Buick's attempt to pass off a video on YouTube as footage captured by a bystander. This video was quickly identified as a fake on blogs like Straightline (on the www.edmunds.com Web site) and even by viewers commenting on the video on YouTube. Is it any wonder that consumers are a bit cynical? A trust mark or some kind of label guaranteeing authenticity may be necessary to reassure suspicious consumers.

Volkswagon is a brand that has suffered some harm to its brand equity from an organic citizen ad that featured a VW Polo minimizing damage from a terrorist bomb attack. The bomb exploded in the car, but the strength and indestructibility of the car prevented damage to the would-be innocent victims. The citizen ad featured Polo in a positive light, but the ad set off cries from critics who thought Volkswagon endorsed the ad, saying the ad was insensitive and politically inappropriate. Volkswagon's public relations staff was placed in the undesirable position of creating a crisis communication campaign to repair the damage to its reputation. One point of discussion in the industry is whether negative GRPs (gross rating points, a measure of the weight of a brand's communication vehicles in the media market for a specific period of time) should be assessed against marketing communication campaigns that suffer from negative publicity and perceptions when citizen advertising works against a brand's image.

There are legal issues at play, too. Consumer content producers might use content that is not original, posing copyright threats. Known as indirect product placement, the threat occurs when the video created includes other brands as backdrops or inadvertent setting props (such as having the main character drive a Toyota to purchase the bag of Doritos when

Doritos is the sponsor but Toyota is not). Brands involved in this way could insist that they be compensated for use of their trademarks or that the video distribution be halted.

Bigger legal concerns are already emerging from a suit filed by Subway against Quiznos and iFilm, the Web site that ran the contest.⁸ The feud began with Quiznos' implementation of a contest, which invited consumers to submit commercials that showed Quiznos sandwiches as superior to Subway sandwiches. Specifically, the Quiznos sandwiches should be shown as meatier. Subway's suit claims that the resulting videos contain false statements and that the microsite developed for the contest, called *meatnomeat.com*, depicts Subway negatively. The case poses a legal question of critical importance to brands considering this approach: if a sponsoring brand's specifications call for making potentially false claims about a competing brand, resulting in consumer ads produced and distributed publicly, but the sponsoring brand itself did not make the false claim, should it be held liable for the user-generated content? The outcome of this case, scheduled for trial in 2009, could end this form of community promotion, making solicited citizen advertising too great a legal liability.

Overall, it is a good idea to remember the motives consumers might have for submitting content to brand-sponsored contests. Are they semi-professionals hoping to parlay a win into a career in film production or advertising? Are they after a simple fifteen minutes of fame? Are they truly brand evangelists eager for an opportunity to share their brand enthusiasm with others? Are they frustrated customers tired of poor customer service? Or is it just about the money, winning the big cash prize that accompanies some incentivized campaigns?

Speaking of cash incentives, there is also a risk that these content providers might begin to demand serious compensation for their idea generation and creative execution. Brands protect themselves to some degree with the fine print in the contest guidelines and rules, but over time this could be an issue.

Even the open distribution systems could limit the effectiveness of citizen advertising as a credible communication device. YouTube and other video sharing sites host a mix of organic CGM2, parody responses to incentivized campaigns, and solicited campaign ad units along with professional videos. What if the ratio of paid to organic placement shifts over time such that YouTube becomes nothing more than a broadcast channel for paid sponsorships?

Perhaps the most important concern is determining whether a consumer-generated ad will be consistent with the brand's strategy. Participants in these campaigns do not necessarily understand the

brand's history, its positioning statement, its creative strategy, or even the characteristics of the target market. The vast majority of ads submitted in response to invitations are at best inconsistent with the brand's strategy or, at worse, totally inappropriate and offensive.

Lastly, brands must remember that while consumers create the content, content creation is not the only task necessary to use the resulting content. Someone has to sift through the entries, respond to queries, deal with public relations, and manage the legal issues that surface.

■ A Burgeoning Support Industry

Brands have many options for entering the arena of consumer-generated advertising. They may follow a limited approach of requesting ideas or copy like Mastercard's Priceless campaign. This can be as simple as integrating the invitation into other media exposures and providing a link online for submission. Other brands, such as Southwest's Wanna Get Away campaign, work with a provider like YouTube to promote and enable submissions and viewing of submissions. Brands can also develop fully interactive sites dedicated to citizen advertising, as Converse did.

For companies that need a more managed solution, there are service providers like ViTrue. ViTrue offers three primary product solutions: branded video communities, its AdMixer program, and Sharkle, a site that hosts citizen-advertising units (organic and mechanistic). The branded video communities are sites developed and hosted by ViTrue, which enable video posting, video sharing, and other social-networking aspects all in a branded format. Pringles' Jingles for Pringles Web site is an example of ViTrue's branded video communities (www.jinglesforpringles.com). The communities encourage brand loyalists (and aspiring creative directors and film producers) to post video advertising and other forms of CGM. ViTrue's AdMixer program (see image 3) is a "mash-up" software that enables brands to invite packaged content drawing upon brand-approved assets. Lastly, organic and packaged content can be submitted to ViTrue's Sharkle (see image 4), a video community that accepts citizen ads for any brand, not just those that use ViTrue's services. Like other communities, Sharkle offers many social-networking features, including messaging, blogging, and file posting.

XLNTads.com is a start-up company designed to host contests for brands sponsoring citizen-advertising campaigns. Brands subscribe to the service, which includes management of the content submissions. XLNTads promotes all the contests live on the site, offers a cash prize

for winning submissions, screens submissions that are objectionable, recommends winners, and hosts the ad units.

Current TV is another innovative player in the citizen-advertising niche market. Current TV is an independent television network, cofounded by Al Gore, that features viewer-created programming and citizen advertising. Brand sponsors like Toyota, Sony, and L’Oreal have invited consumers to submit their ads to Current TV. Content is incentivized with viewers whose spots are chosen to run on the network receiving \$1,000.

■ The Decision to Engage with Citizen Advertising

Consumer-generated advertising will continue to grow in the short term as brands become accustomed to working with consumers to create brand messages. How can brands make the most of this approach? This list of questions can assist in determining whether to pursue a CGA strategy.

- Is the target market for the brand likely to respond to CGA invitations?
- If so, what might they say?
- How likely is it that the messages provided by consumers will be consistent with the brand’s intended positioning strategy?
- How much freedom is the brand willing to provide to consumers generating content? Will organic or packaged contributions be encouraged?
- How will the “invitation” be promoted to the target market?
- How will submissions be judged?
- Will all submissions be shared or will there be a screening process?
- Should the brand collaborate with a site like YouTube to gain increased awareness of the CGA promotion and a distribution outlet?

If the answers to these questions lead the brand to the use of participatory advertising, there are several guidelines for maximizing the potential for effectiveness. First, integrate the CGA promotion with other aspects of the brand’s communications plan. Contests and other CGA executions will be most effective when they are embedded in a brand’s messaging strategy. Second, don’t let fear guide the brand’s response to citizen ads. Even submissions with off-point messages can act as an engagement device and result in benefits to brand equity. Remember that spoofs are not always meant as insults. Third, collect biographical sketches on the consumers submitting advertising. There are many reasons for this. As consumers become more aware and increasingly cynical due to

counterfeit citizen ads and shilling practices, being able to talk about the creators of citizen ads will offer a counter to suspicions about the authenticity of the program. Plus, the stories about contributors could easily be fodder for engaging other consumers. The insights from film contributors on the Converse Gallery Web site are great examples of this. Fourth, do encourage submissions from amateurs. If CGA gets a reputation for being created by brand professionals, it will backfire. Already there is a perception that winning user-generated advertising tends to come from professionals or semiprofessionals looking for a career break. If this trend continues, everyday contributors—the true amateurs—may lose interest in participating. While amateurs should be encouraged, a professional context for the contest should be created to promote high-quality content. Consider issuing personalized invitations to highly talented and/or highly involved brand fans. Fifth, remember the motives that drive citizen submissions. Content creators likely want fame or fortune, or both. Offer incentives and promote the winners. Feed their desire for recognition and reward. Lastly, remember that organic CGA is a source of insight into the consumers' beliefs about your brand. If consumers develop ads with a certain brand message, there is a good chance others in your target audience feel the same way.

What are the characteristics of successful citizen-advertising campaigns? They can be summed up with a few key words.

- **Consistency:** The framework for the contest ensures the resulting ad submissions are consistent with the brand's positioning and strategy.
- **Democracy:** The brand managers must be prepared to accept the work of the participants. Brand democracy is meant to be democratic, with a voice to those who choose to use it.
- **Authenticity:** Consumer content creators and content recipients appreciate more fluidity and creative freedom. The closer to pure organic the submissions are, the more valuable the message the ads promote will be.
- **Participatory:** The campaign enables participation from many consumers, not just those who wish to create content. Others can engage by voting for favorites, critiquing submissions, and sharing content with "send this to a friend" capabilities and by embedding links on blogs and social-networking sites.

Marketers who recognize the value of CGA understand that an inherent trade-off is accepting that not all the consumer dialogue created will be positive or on point with a brand's positioning strategy. They understand that there is a net gain to engaging consumers and that even

parodies serve to provide brand exposure. Ultimately, the goal should be to create and nurture a relationship between consumers and the brand. Relationships are not perfect. They have their ups and downs, but valuable relationships offer more good to the parties involved than bad. This is a basic principle of citizen advertising and the philosophy of brand democratization.